

July 25, 2007

Jim DeTienne
Supervisor

vacant
EMS System
Program

Kim Todd
Trauma
System
Program

Bobbi Perkins
Injury
Prevention
Program

vacant
EMS Services /
Performance
Improvement

Gail Hatch
Data Program

Amy Mays
Office
Manager

Jennie Nemec
Nurse
Consultant

Your assistance needed:

- EMS & Trauma Systems Performance Audit
- Interim Legislative Committee Study of EMS
- EMS&TS survey and data collection needs

Several activities are being conducted at the same time which are very important, not only to the EMS&TS Section, but also to the future of Montana's EMS System.

First, the 2005 Legislative Audit Committee authorized and prioritized a performance audit of Montana emergency medical services. Based on risk assessment work, the Legislative Auditor determined an audit was warranted. Additionally, in an effort to coordinate resources, the audit committee is working together with the Children, Families, Health and Human Service Interim Committee to obtain information for their study on rural EMS (see SJ5 on page two).

The primary focus of this audit is to evaluate the provision of pre-hospital care. The following summarizes the goals of this audit:

1. Identify the components and evaluate the condition of Montana's EMS system
2. Assess how the department administers EMS
3. Determine the level of activity and distribution of EMS resources. Compare activity to availability of resources

Primary methodologies of this audit include:

- Gather and analyze statistical information about the number and types of EMS providers and services, number of EMS incidents, etc.
- Interview and/or survey EMS providers and stakeholders
- Define and quantify the differences in EMS across the state
- Review how EMS is funded at the state and local levels
- Evaluate management procedures in the department such as staffing, strategic planning, budgeting, and mission, goals, and objectives attainment
- Identify EMS needs and/or gaps in services
- Providing analysis of best practices and/or options for improvements

In addition to reviewing Department records relative to the administration of EMS, the audit committee has spent several weeks interviewing EMSTS staff and others. They are now expanding their interviews and information gathering activities to a representative sample of EMS services. As such, you may be contacted in the near future by staff of the audit committee about a face to face interview. **Please note that this is NOT an audit of you or your service**, but rather, this is an effort to obtain information from the field about the status of Montana's EMS system, about the various types of EMS services and their operations, and about the challenges they face in providing prehospital care. The information and comments you provide will be confidential and only reported to us in a summary fashion. If contacted, we would appreciate your assistance in helping audit committee staff to collect the information they need for their review and SJ5.

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Secondly, Senate Joint Resolution 5 (SJ5), passed in the 2007 Legislative Session, requested an interim study on rural EMS. On June 26, the Children, Families, Health and Human Service Interim Committee held an organization meeting and as part of several other activities, they accepted oversight of this study of EMS.

SJR 5 directs the committee to:

- gather information on the state's emergency care system;
- conduct a statewide assessment of issues that communities face relating to emergency medical services;
- identify challenges to the continued viability of the state's emergency care system; and
- identify objectives and strategies that will help ensure the continued viability of the system

In general, the committee will begin to hear reports about the status of EMS from DPHHS, BOME, field providers and others at their September meeting. They will continue to gather additional information for their November and January meetings. Between January and March, the committee will review information they have gathered; review and decide on legislative options; and develop a report of the final results of the study - including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations - to the 61st Legislature.

Further information about this committee, its meetings, and activities can be found at: http://www.leg.mt.gov/css/committees/interim/2007_2008/child_fam/default.asp. Under this page, you can also sign up for emailed electronic notices about their proceedings.

Lastly, the EMS&TS section will also be requesting information and data relative to the status of EMS. *We cannot develop strategies and solutions if we're not capturing the problem.*

We will make every attempt to coordinate and compliment our data collection efforts with those of the audit and interim study committees. Our efforts will not only support current review of the EMS system, but this represents a long-term commitment to evaluate and improve our efforts to provide leadership and coordination to the emergency care community in assessing, planning, developing and promoting comprehensive, evidence-based emergency medical and trauma services.

This is a lot of activity, but this also represents an unprecedented time for Montana EMS and trauma systems. We are hopeful that the deliberations of the audit and interim committees, the continue efforts of the EMS System Task Force and State Trauma Care Committees and your help will result in support and improvements in Montana's emergency care system.

Please feel free to contact us any time if you have questions, comments or suggestions.

